



5 Apps that Every Teacher Needs in their Toolbox

Posted on [October 2, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

My challenge was to whittle this list down to 5 of the most helpful (and free) apps that are 'MUST HAVES' for teachers and students. Feel free to [ask me](#) for help in getting started. And if you have an absolute 'must have', please email me and I'll add it to the list.

Here goes...



Google Docs - This suite of apps is almost revolutionary in how we can work with students or staff. It includes a **word processor** (like MS Word),

Spreadsheet (like Excel), **Forms** (like any survey with an automatic download to spreadsheet), **Presentation** (like powerpoint) and **Drawing**. You have options for collaboration through invitation or complete privacy. Imagine not hearing "I left it at home" or not having to organize those email homework attachments. Conferring and commenting can be done online and students can respond directly to your comments. A quick scan of the docs and you can gage where students are in the process. Imagine having your students take a quick online survey and sharing the results right away.



Crocodoc - Note-taking (or annotating) is an effective learning

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- [Wiki Learning Series - Digital Sandbox](#)

RESOURCES

- [ABCya! \(word clouds\)](#)
- [ARC-BC \(alt resources\)](#)
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strategy to support research, summarize content and synthesize thinking. And it is a great memory aid (combining visual and kinesthetic action). [Crocodoc](#) will take any content such as documents, pdf and images (on your computer or online) or webpages and allow you to 'markup' or scribble your own notes. You can collaboratively work on the same document and share the annotated work in multiple ways. This is an incredible way to support critical thinking in your class.



Word Clouds - [Wordle](#), [Tagxedo](#), [Tagul](#) or [ABCya!](#). In

a nutshell, these are 'words come alive'. In its simplest form, they make great image headers. But they can also be used to analyze writing (themes, plot), provide a synthesis of information, vocabulary development, or introduce a flavour of new units (a teaser). Each of these apps offer a little take on the same concept - any text or typed list can be converted into a cloud/shape organized by colour and size depending on the number of times it shows up in the text. You may be familiar with [Wordle](#), which has shown up on numerous websites and newspapers. For primary students using [ABCya!](#) offers a simpler version of word clouds. [Tagxedo](#) offers a variety of shapes instead of just a cloud including your own images. [Tagul](#) hyperlinks every word to google search so you can dive directly into research.



Social Bookmarks - [Delicious](#), [Diigo](#).

Are your favourite websites bookmarked on your home computer? Get access to them whenever or wherever you are! You can categorize them by class or content so your students have a list of resources to start their research (rather than the usual 'hit and miss' google tactics). For elementary teachers, set a category for your parents to receive information on your curriculum (a golden opportunity to partner the learning with the home). [Delicious](#) has a large following so you can access other accounts to see what they are collecting and add to yours. [Diigo](#) has an added feature that allows for online annotation and sticky notes and these can be shared. This may

- [Destination Success \(register\)](#)
- [DocsPal \(converter\)](#)
- [Google Docs](#)
- [Pic Lits \(compose poetry\)](#)
- [Rubistar \(Rubric Creator\)](#)
- [TimeGlider \(Mnenograph\)](#)
- [Timetoast \(timeline creator\)](#)
- [Tripline \(map timeline\)](#)
- [Wordle \(word clouds\)](#)

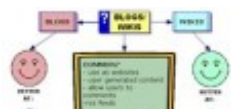
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be good if you have an article that you wish groups to read and comment. (*Diigo requires a download.)



Graphic Organizers - [Bubbl.us](#), [Webspiration](#), [Inspiration](#), [Kidspiration](#).

Before writing or presenting, create your brainstorms and organize your thinking online. [Bubbl.us](#) allows the creation of colourful mindmaps and the ability to work collaboratively on one map. Share the work, embed on a website, blog or wiki or simply print it off. Being online means that access is anytime, anywhere.

[Inspiration and Kidspiration](#) are paid applications that you will find as part of our computer image (elementary and secondary). As such, students have full access to an extensive image library as well as audio and video capabilities. However, access is restricted to school. [Webspiration](#) is the online beta (pared down) version of Inspiration and anyone can access it anywhere.

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Tagged [Literacy](#), [reading](#), [adapted](#), [tools](#), [pro_d](#), [News](#), [prof_learning](#), [web2](#), [digital writing](#), [differentiation](#)

Newsletter off the Presses...

Posted on [September 28, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



September's newsletter is hot off the presses. [Click here](#) for your copy.

Posted in [Fast ForWord](#), [Kurzweil 3000](#), [LSS](#), [Literacy](#), [News](#), [Professional Learning](#)

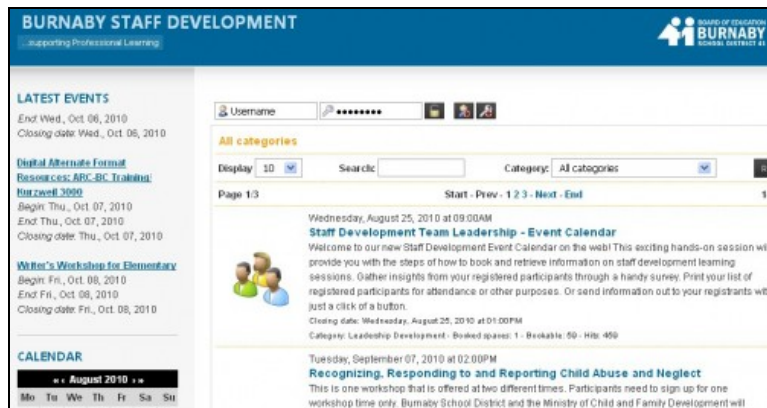
September - Exciting Things in the Air

Posted on [August 22, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

□ **Welcome back** to another year of exciting things

to discover. While I love the summer as a time for rejuvenation and wanderings of a different pace, September always brings a crispness in the air and a sense of quiet anticipation.

We're launching some things that are a little different this year, which will make life easier (streamlining a process) and let your 'fingers do the walking'. We are extremely pleased and head-over-heels excited to show you our new [Staff Development Calendar](https://blogs.sd41.bc.ca/staffdevelopmentcalendar/) (<https://blogs.sd41.bc.ca/staffdevelopmentcalendar/>) for all district registration of workshops, learning series and events, and anything else that needs registering. *(This site replaces our district's Professional Development handbook.)*



Have you ever forgotten to register for that fabulous workshop and then called only to find it full? Or went through registration via voice mail or email and hoped you did it all right? Or have you hunted high and low for that elusive handbook that 10 other people wanted too? Our new online [SD Calendar](https://blogs.sd41.bc.ca/staffdevelopmentcalendar/) makes all these frustrating time-wasters a thing of the past! Simply go to the [district site](#), look for the Staff Development icon on the right side and log in using your **sd41 groupwise id**.

**** Registration** is a breeze as well as flexible – anytime, anywhere you have internet connection. Link directly to your session presenters and get detailed information or email them from within the program (you don't have to open groupwise email)! Print out your entire bookings. Get last minute updates immediately – Wow! And like all blogging platforms, we've made it so you can search by categories, tags or dates. [Click here](#) for registration instructions.

The days of waiting for confirmation phone calls are over. An added bonus in the e-environment – we'll be saving quite a few trees. Stay tuned for more information in September or click the link above and get a head start on your plans.



Digital Writing/Digital Sharing: Over July, I was able to participate in a wiki-camp with people from all over the globe. It was a fabulous experience to be able to learn and share information

with teachers, administrators, librarians, and specialists from as far away as New Zealand, Argentina, Estonia and Spain. Through all the chatting I've collected a mountain of ideas that I'm excited about and hoping that some of you will join me in this adventure to offer learning opportunities to students to grow their thinking as well as ours. One of them is a [Digital Writing/Digital Teaching Series Using Wikis](#) (which can include an option for collaborative epals). This type of platform allows for differentiation and flexibility in how we teach students the art of writing and reading. As well you'll learn a bunch of other tools that can be added to enhance any blog or website. All of this is built along the lines of writing/communicating and inquiry.

Along similar ideas is another series in **Digital Writers Workshop using Google Docs** (in partnership with Judi in Literacy). And then of course, there is the [Wiki Learning Series](#), integrating all those handy tools in purposeful ways. You'll want to know how these applications or tools open doors to connect, communicate and develop thinking in the 21st century. For more information on these opportunities or the many others, please consider three options: check this blog often; register yourself for an RSS feed (see sidebar) and information will be delivered to you through email or a reader of your choice; go to the staff development calendar. As well, feel free to [email me](#).

[Professional Learning](#), [Writing](#), [web2.0](#)

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Summer Days...

Posted on [June 30, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



Another year and looking forward to slower days and just time to reflect and have a little fun (with no alarm clock)! Just to rev myself up and rejuvenate – I’ve joined a wiki camp this month and its been a lot of fun getting to meet and chat with many people around the world.

Here are some things that I’m playing with right now (with a little twist): [Continue reading →](#)

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Add to your Teaching Toolkit!

Posted on [June 6, 2010](#) | [Leave a comment](#)



This [Math site](#) (Math Makes Sense 7) came from [Lindsay Holliday](#) at Lochdale and she says its interactive component is great for those students who just don’t get it! The site is from [Jim Reed](#) (Alberta) who has amassed a huge collection of both elementary and secondary math activities. It’s worth checking out. Please be aware that it uses Flash. [Continue reading →](#)

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